

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

al 51
U.S.S. Reserve

Inside Information

5/1/84

United States Department
of Agriculture

Office of Information

Washington, D.C. 20250

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

May 1, 1984

INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

Page

1984 Agricultural Communicators' Congress set for June in Washington, D.C.....	1
Two USDA information positions announced, with FNS Chicago, FSIS Washington...	2
Two USDA communicators retire after 64 years of combined government service...	2
OIG to survey USDA publications, audiovisual management, at OMB request.....	2
Cooperative Extension Service publications cost recovery reported.....	3
International teleconferencing demonstrated at Philadelphia symposium.....	3
Newest crop growing on U.S. farms is computers, according to report.....	3
USDA says use of its "USDA Online" electronic news service is growing.....	4

USDA LIBRARY
MAY 1 1984

AG COMMUNICATORS CONGRESS AHEAD

Members of seven national agricultural communications groups will gather at a first-ever U.S. Agricultural Communicators' Congress on June 24-27 in Washington, D.C. Registration forms for the congress and hotel reservation forms have been sent to more than 2,000 members of the seven organizations.

Those who have not received the packet should immediately contact USACC reservations at P.O. Box 2228, Rockville, MD 20852, or call (301) 984-8400.

May 15 is the deadline for early registration, which will result in a \$30 reduction in the fee.

The congress is being designed by the five sponsoring organizations as a national agricultural news conference. Although it will focus heavily on farm policies of top governmental leaders and presidential candidates invited to appear, communications technology trends also will be discussed.

The five sponsoring organizations are the Agricultural Communicators in Education, Agricultural Relations Council, American Agricultural Editors' Association, Cooperative Editorial Association and National Association of Farm Broadcasters. Two other organizations taking part are Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture and Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow.

The meeting is projected to draw the broadest range of agricultural communicators ever assembled at a single event. Communicators who are not members of the seven organizations are also invited to attend the congress.

Traditionally, the communicator groups meet separately each year, sometimes in the nation's capital but usually in other cities.

Format for the event will be akin to a three-day news conference, where the nation's agricultural journalists can confront key policy-makers on future agricultural policies, farm credit, environment, food safety, foreign trade, soil and water conservation and other agricultural issues.

The congress will serve as a forum for policy leaders to speak indirectly to the entire agricultural community at a single news event.

Members of the Agricultural Relations Council are credited with conceiving and promoting the concept of a major meeting of the various agricultural communicator groups. The four other sponsoring organizations endorsed the plan last year and joined forces to plan the 1984 event.

Headquarters site for the meeting will be the J.W. Marriott Corporation's new flagship hotel at National Place, located at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street, next to the National Press Club and a short distance from The Mall.

TWO USDA INFORMATION POSITIONS OPEN

Two vacant USDA information positions have been announced--one with the Food & Nutrition Service in Chicago, Ill., and the other with the Food Safety & Inspection Service in Washington, D.C.

Deadline for the Chicago position applications is May 7.

The GS-9 or GS-11 public affairs specialist will be mostly involved in writing and editing of news releases and articles about FNS programs, and in developing and maintaining a communications network with the public.

Contact Marie Demma in Personnel Operations, Midwest Regional Office, FNS, 50 East Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602, or call (312) 353-3341.

Deadline for the Washington, D.C., position applications is May 15.

The GS-7 or GS-9 writer-editor will be involved with speeches, special reports, background briefings, testimony and policy statements.

Contact Darlene Herald, Personnel Office, Room 3161-S, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

TWO USDA COMMUNICATORS RETIRE

Bill Carnahan, USDA Extension Service public affairs specialist, retired a few weeks ago after 32 years of government service, the last 28 with USDA, and Murray Lemmon, photographer with the USDA Office of Information, also retired after 32 years of government service, 27 with USDA.

Carnahan's tour of duty began with the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, then continued with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Office of Information, Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service and finally the Extension Service.

He served as photo editor of four USDA Yearbooks of Agriculture, and as director of the Washington, D.C., Region of the Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE).

Lemmon began his USDA service with the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service. He joined the Photography Division of the Office of Information in 1958.

OIG TO SURVEY USDA PUBLISHING

The Office of Management & Budget has asked USDA's Office of Inspector General to survey USDA agencies to see if they have taken "corrective action" to eliminate and consolidate those publications identified by USDA in its reports to OMB as required under the Reform '88 program and OMB Bulletin 81-16.

The survey most likely will be expanded to cover audiovisual activities included in OMB's original moratorium instructions. Although no date for completing the survey has been reported, it should be finished soon.

REGIONAL NAFB MEETING SCHEDULED

The Southeast Regional meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters will be held June 1-2 in Memphis, Tenn. Buddy Sanders, WMC-WMC-TV, at Memphis, has the details.

PUBLICATIONS COST RECOVERY SUMMARIZED

The number of state Cooperative Extension Services recovering costs for publications by selling them has increased--and will continue to do so--based on the latest review of Extension publication programs.

Budget cuts coupled with higher production, distribution and postage costs contributed significantly to the adoption of cost recovery programs in 60 of the 71 state Extension Services surveyed by USDA's Extension Service.

Since the last survey, published in 1982, four states have begun charging for either more or all of their publications. Eight states and territories plan to begin cost recovery programs or to increase the number of publications they sell in the near future.

Some states indicate that although their overall sales policy remains the same as reported in 1982, fine-tuning of their cost recovery program continues.

Several states reported significant savings from first-year cost recovery efforts. Oregon State University recovered about \$60,000 in its first year.

At the federal level, USDA's Extension Service has expanded its cost-share printing program as a viable alternative to charging for publications.

Since the adoption by USDA of a "user fee policy" for publications in 1981, Extension Service now cost-shares printing and production costs of publications from other USDA and federal agencies, the private sector and more recently, from other states and regions within the Cooperative Extension Service system.

Details of the survey are available in a USDA Extension Fact Sheet: Cost Recovery Programs for Publications in the Cooperative Extension Service. Copies are available from the Information & Communications Staff, Extension Service, Room 3432-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send request to Dialcom mailbox AGS096, or call (202) 447-4651.

INTERNATIONAL TELECONFERENCING POSSIBLE

Larry Quinn, chief of the USDA Office of Information's Video & Film Division, recently witnessed the first five-point international video teleconference at the International Teleconference Symposium in Philadelphia, Pa.

The five-point video program locations were London, Sydney, Toronto, Tokyo and Philadelphia. The symposium covered topics related to technical equipment as well as the human factors involved in effective audio or video conferencing. Computer conferencing also was covered in some sessions, Quinn said.

More information about the symposium are available from Quinn, Room 1602-S Video & Film Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send request to Dialcom mailbox AGRO16, or call (202) 447-2592.

COMPUTER USE ON FARMS GROWING

The newest crop growing on U.S. farms is computers, according to New York-based market researchers Frost & Sullivan, Inc.

According to news items, farmers and farm-related businesses will spend \$868 million in the next four years for computers and data processing services. Farmers are expected to spend \$428 million on more than 94,000 microcomputers.

In addition, Frost & Sullivan says 41,000 farm stores, farm implement dealers and fertilizer distributors--a 128 percent increase over the 18,000 now--will spend \$440 million to buy their own computers.

USE OF USDA'S "ONLINE" SERVICE GROWING

Number of users and "hits" to "USDA Online," USDA's electronic news and information service, has doubled since the first of the year, according to USDA's Office of Information which manages the service through the computer time-share services of ITT Dialcom Incorporated.

Nearly 4,000 hits were recorded during March. A hit is defined as one access to a category within the USDA Online menu. Several releases or items within a category may have been read. Hits were recorded every day of the month, including 91 on the weekends.

About 210 regular users accessed USDA Online services during March. About 41 percent of the users are USDA executives, program offices and public information offices, both in Washington, D.C., and in the field, and 40 percent are land grant university offices (Extension Service, Experiment Station, etc.) in 31 states and county Extension Service offices in 3 states.

Nearly 20 percent of the other users include state departments of agriculture, other federal and state agencies, agricultural and trade organizations and news media; latter include commercial electronic agricultural news and information services, as well as farm broadcasters, farm magazines, newsletters etc.

A regular user is defined as one who accessed the USDA Online service on at least an occasional basis. "One-time" explorers were not included in the statistics.

About 59 percent of the hits during the month were for "AGa.m.," the daily 2-page summary of agricultural news carried by newswires and other media.

A fourth of the hits were for USDA news releases; 22 percent for national releases and 3 percent for regional releases. Any one hit could have resulted in the reading of several news releases issued during a day, or the past week.

Fourteen percent of the hits were for USDA statistical and economic reports--6 percent for outlook and situation report summaries from the Economic Research Service, 5 percent for crop and livestock reports from the Statistical Reporting Service and 3 percent for reports from the Foreign Agricultural Service (primarily the weekly roundup of world production and trade).

Two percent of the hits were for the weekly "Farm Paper Letter," prepared by the Office of Information's News Division.

Apparently most of the news release readers were also "AGa.m." readers, as indicated by the hits for releases immediately after those for "AGa.m." by many of the users. But those accessing the statistical or economic reports usually were different than those going after the news releases or "AGa.m."

Among the "other" users (other than USDA or land grant universities), the media users included AgriData Network (formerly AgriStar), Agri-Markets Data Service, Brownfield Radio Network, Computer Farming Newsletter, Farm Journal, Successful Farming and Webster Communications Corp. (Food & Fiber Letter, etc.).

Organizations using the service included the American Egg Board, Associated Milk Producers Inc., Iowa Farm Bureau, National Wheat Growers Association, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Pioneer Hibred International, State & Federal Association, Winrock International Research Center and American Bar Association.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to Stan W. Prochaska or Nancy Bevis, Room 402-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or to AGR002 mailbox on the Dialcom electronic mail system, or call (202) 447-7454.

